

We claim:

1. In a cooler for beverage containers wherein the beverage containers are chilled by direct contact with ice and ice water, said cooler having walls and a bottom defining in combination a  
5 main cooling compartment accessible through an open top, the improvement comprising:

a generally vertically oriented chute sized to receive horizontally disposed beverage containers in a generally vertical stack, said chute having a lower opening providing ingress into said main cooling compartment whereby the lowermost beverage container within said chute is directed horizontally along said bottom and into said main cooling compartment.

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2. The cooler of claim 1, the improvement further comprising a chute ramp member positioned within said chute, said chute ramp member directing said lowermost beverage container horizontally through said opening.

- 15 3. The cooler of claim 2, the improvement further comprising an opposing ramp member positioned across said bottom opposite said chute ramp member, said opposing ramp member directing said beverage containers vertically within said main cooling compartment.

4. The cooler of claim 1, wherein said chute is defined by a divider wall positioned between  
20 two opposing walls of said cooler and adjacent a remaining wall of said cooler.

5. The cooler of claim 4, wherein said divider wall is removable.

6. The cooler of claim 5, the improvement further comprising retaining means on said two opposing walls of said cooler to retain said divider wall.

5 7. The cooler of claim 6, wherein said retaining means comprise slots in said two opposing walls of said cooler.

8. The cooler of claim 6, wherein said retaining means comprise brackets on said two opposing walls of said cooler.

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9. The cooler of claim 2, wherein said chute ramp member is removable from said cooler.

10. The cooler of claim 3, wherein said chute ramp member and said opposing ramp member are removable from said cooler.

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11. The cooler of claim 2, wherein said chute is defined by a divider wall positioned between two opposing walls of said cooler and adjacent a remaining wall of said cooler, and wherein said divider wall, and said chute ramp member are removable from said cooler.

20 12. The cooler of claim 3, wherein said chute is defined by a divider wall positioned between two opposing walls of said cooler and adjacent a remaining wall of said cooler, and wherein said

divider wall, said chute ramp member and said opposing ramp member are removable from said cooler.

13. The cooler of claim 5, wherein said cooler further comprises a lid member, and the  
5 improvement further comprises a slot disposed within said lid member sized to receive said divider wall for storage.

14. The cooler of claim 3, the improvement further comprising a shelf extending from said lower opening of said chute and across said bottom of said cooler.

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15. The cooler of claim 14, the improvement further comprising a reversing ramp member positioned on a wall of said cooler above said opposing ramp member, whereby said beverage cans are diverted onto said shelf.

15 16. The cooler of claim 4, the improvement further comprising apertures positioned in said divider wall.

17. A cooler for beverage containers wherein beverage containers are chilled by direct contact with ice and ice water, said cooler comprising in combination:

20 four walls, a bottom, an open top, and a lid adapted to cover said open top;

a divider wall extending between two opposing walls of said four walls and positioned generally parallel to another of said walls, said divider wall having a bottom edge spaced from

said bottom to define a lower opening, whereby the combination of said divider wall and said another of said walls defines a chute adapted to receive beverage containers aligned in a generally vertical stack; and

5 a chute ramp member positioned at the junction of said bottom and said another of said walls, whereby said chute ramp member directs the lowermost of said beverage containers disposed in said chute horizontally through said lower opening and into said main cooling compartment.

18. The cooler of claim 17, further comprising an opposing ramp member at the junction of  
10 said bottom and one of said side walls opposite from said chute ramp member, whereby said opposing ramp member directs said beverage containers in the vertical direction.

19. The cooler of claim 17, wherein said divider wall is removable.

15 20. The cooler of claim 19, wherein said chute ramp member is removable.

21. The cooler of claim 18, wherein said divider wall is removable.

22. The cooler of claim 21, wherein said chute ramp member and said opposing ramp  
20 member are removable.

23. The cooler of claim 17, further comprising apertures positioned in said divider wall.

24. The cooler of claim 19, further comprising retainer means positioned on said two opposing walls to retain said divider wall.

5 25. The cooler of claim 24, wherein said retainer means comprises slots positioned on said two opposing walls.

26. The cooler of claim 24, wherein said retainer means comprises brackets positioned on said two opposing walls.

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27. The cooler of claim 19, further comprising a slot disposed within said lid, said slot adapted to receive said divider wall for storage.